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Current Municipal Affairs

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## CURRENT MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

WILLIAM BENNETT MUNRO

The Metropolitan Plan Commission appointed by the Governor of Massachusetts under statutory authority given to him at the last legislative session, has announced in general form the chief recommendations which it proposes to incorporate in its forthcoming report. This commission, which consists of Edward A. Filene, J. Randolph Coolidge, Jr., and John Nolen, has made a careful study of municipal planning boards and their operations in European and American cities. Their provisional recommendations are for the establishment of a permanent state commission with planning jurisdiction over the Boston Metropolitan District which comprises thirty-eight cities and towns. This permanent commission would be composed of five members, three to be appointed by the Governor of Massachusetts and two by the Mayor of Boston, the chairman to have a salary of \$10,000 per annum and the other members to be paid \$1,000 each. It is proposed to give this commission a general supervisory authority over the planning of all streets, parks, boulevards, and similar public works throughout the Metropolitan District; the commission would be expected to draft a comprehensive scheme of future development covering all construction undertaken out of public moneys whether by the state or by any municipality. It is not proposed that the Metropolitan Plan Commission, if established on a permanent basis, shall have any power directly to undertake improvement projects or to compel any municipality to put its plans into operation; but it would be given power to interpose a temporary veto upon all municipal construction not in harmony with general plans for the whole metropolitan district. It is further proposed that towards the cost of all metropolitan enterprises undertaken in conformity with plans of the commission, a grant of ten per cent of the estimated expense shall be made from the state treasury. All these recommendations have been incorporated in a bill which will come before the Massachusetts legislature early in 1912.

The November election campaign in Philadelphia resulted in the choice of Mr. Rudolph Blankenburg as mayor of the city. At the

primary election which preceded the regular polling, the regular Republican organization chose at the head of its ticket Mr. George H. Earle, Jr. The support given to this candidate at the primaries indicated the likelihood of his election; but the vacillating course which he pursued during the weeks preceding the election and the public opposition which was aroused against the so-termed Penrose machine served greatly to weaken his support. Mr. Blankenburg, who represented the anti-machine influences of the city, won by a substantial majority, although somewhat to the surprise of his own chief sponsors. The outcome is a signal triumph for the cause of improved civic administration in Philadelphia where an unscrupulous group of Republican politicians have for many years exerted far too much influence at City Hall. Mr. Blankenburg is the first Philadelphia mayor in recent years to go into office without pledges to any party organization and his administration has at the outset shown promise of striking success. A significant feature of the new régime is the readiness with which the higher city officials are enlisting the coöperation of the Philadelphia Bureau of Municipal Research in a study of the finances of the city. The Bureau in connection with this work has issued a comprehensive digest of the city's budget estimates for 1912, which forms a printed document of over one hundred and sixty pages.

On November 8, at the regular municipal election, the voters of Cleveland ratified certain amendments to an ordinance passed December 18, 1909, and known as the Tayler Grant, entitled "An ordinance giving a renewal of the street railway grants of the Cleveland Railway Company, fixing the time and conditions of such renewal grant, changing the rates of fare, regulating transfers, and terminating existing grants." These amendments may be summarized as follows: Section 16, as amended, provides that the capital value of the company's property for the purposes of fixing the rate of fare and determining the return to the company and the price at which the property may be purchased by the city, shall consist of the bonded indebtedness, the floating indebtedness, and the residue of the capital value in the sum of \$14,675,600. Additions to the capital value may be made pursuant to the terms of the ordinance. Section 19 creates an interest fund, in its inception to consist of \$500,000, to which shall be added monthly the sum remaining after the deduction from gross receipts of eleven and one half cents per car mile for each revenue mile and sixty per cent of that for trailers, together with the amounts

deducted from gross receipts for maintenance, renewal, and depreciation accounts. From the fund thus provided, taxes, interest, and dividends are to be paid as required in the ordinance—interest on bonds at the rate of five per cent per annum, on floating debt at six per cent, and on the residue of the capital value at six per cent per annum. Section 21 provides that the foregoing amounts per car mile may be changed, if necessary, by agreement between the company and the city. Such changes may be required to enable the company to meet its legitimate operating expenses. On the other hand any surplus remaining unexpended for operating expenses at the end of a year must be turned into the interest fund. Section 28 gives to the company and the city the right to propose extensions, betterments, and permanent improvements under specific conditions. The proposals made by the company must be ratified by the city council, while those advanced by the city must be carried into execution, unless the company contends that it is unable to secure the requisite funds in which case there shall be an arbitration of the matter. The same section provides that immediately on the taking effect of the ordinance the company shall expend \$2,500,000 in such improvements as may be designated by the city. Nothing is to be added to the capital value of the property on account of the aforementioned improvements without the consent of the city. In section 32, the company by acceptance of the ordinance, agrees with the city that the latter at any time during the grant or any renewal of it, may exercise the right to take over the system, operated by the Cleveland Railway Co., by serving six months' notice of such an intention. The price shall include the capital value of the property plus ten per cent, the city at the same time assuming all the obligations of the company, enumerated in detail in the ordinance. If the city shall not have purchased at the expiration of the grant, it may then do so under the same conditions as above set forth, except that the ten per cent shall not be added to the capital value and the value of those parts of the system lying without the city shall be deducted and the city may require such outlying parts of the system to be conveyed to such person or corporation as it may designate. Finally, if at the expiration of this grant franchises shall be granted to others than the existing company to operate over its lines, the said companies shall be obliged to purchase the property owned by the existing company upon the same terms laid down for the city.

The New York Bureau of Municipal Research has been enabled through gifts from Mrs. E. H. Harriman and others to establish a school for the training of municipal experts. As plans for the new school have so far been formulated, it is proposed to enroll four classes of students: (a) college graduates who desire a year or two of general training in municipal research before entering some form of public service or social work; (b) accountants who desire to qualify themselves by professional training as experts in municipal accounting and public finance; (c) superintendents of schools, secretaries of boards of trade, heads of civic organizations and others who desire to supplement their previous training by contact with practical problems of city government, and (d) advanced students of economics, sociology and government who desire to pursue studies involving special research and requiring skilled guidance. The curriculum proposed will include instruction in the analyzing of budget estimates and the drafting of city charters, practice in municipal accounting and in the preparation of official statements.

A portion of the funds at the disposal of the Bureau will be available for the publication of results obtained and data gathered by students. It is announced that the chief purpose of the school will be to give its students such general and special training as will fit them to serve capably in various branches of the municipal service.

The seventeenth annual meeting of the National Municipal League and Conference for Good City Government was held at Richmond Va., during the week beginning November 13. The annual address of the President, Hon. William Dudley Foulke, was entitled "Effective Municipal Government." It was chiefly a description of the organization of the municipal achievements of Frankfort-on-the-Main and contained various suggestions concerning the adaptation of certain German methods to American conditions. Hon. Charles J. Bonaparte gave an address upon "Municipal Civil Service Reform" and a paper on "Antitoxin for Municipal Waste and Corruption" by Richard H. Dana of Cambridge, Mass., dealt with the same topic. The subject of excess condemnation and special assessments was discussed in a paper by Lawson Purdy, president of the Board of Taxes and Assessment of New York, and Professor Robert C. Brooks of the University of Cincinnati presented a study of the "German Imperial Unearned Increment Tax." A session was devoted to public service franchises and a committee of the League which has been studying

this general subject for the last two or three years presented a report through Hon. Robert Treat Paine of Boston, its chairman. Other committees of the League likewise presented their reports on the police and liquor problems. At a session on budget-making and allied subjects an exhaustive paper on the subject of the "Massachusetts Law on Municipal Indebtedness" was read by Charles F. Gettemy of Boston, director of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics. Hon. Harvey N. Shepard of Boston also discussed the relation between the Massachusetts city and the state, pointing out the entire dependence of the city upon special statutes for even its most elementary powers. An afternoon was given over to direct legislation and preferential voting, with a paper on the former subject by Dr. W. E. Rappard and on the latter by Mr. R. M. Hull of Harvard University. There were several round-table discussions, one of which dealt with commission government.

At the annual business meeting of the League a new constitution was adopted. A council which will hereafter take the place of the old executive committee was established. It was decided that honorary members might be hereafter elected to the League at its annual meetings, and Hon James Bryce was chosen as the League's first honorary member. Plans for the publication of a *National Municipal Review*, to appear quarterly, were completed, and the first number of the periodical appeared early in January. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year: president, William Dudley Foulke; vice-presidents, A. Lawrence Lowell, George McAneny, Camillus G. Kidder, Charles W. Richardson, H. D. W. English, Jane Addams, William Kent; treasurer, George Burnham, Jr.; secretary, Clinton Rogers Woodruff; chairman of Council, Albert Bushnell Hart. The next convention of the League is to be held at Los Angeles, Cal., in the summer of 1912.

A feature of the National Municipal League's convention at Richmond was the conference of civic secretaries held in connection with it. This conference was attended by secretaries of city clubs, good government associations, local improvements leagues, and other civic organizations in different parts of the country, about forty in all. Many matters of common interest were discussed and it is intended to make the conference an annual affair in the hope that it will serve as a clearing-house for the exchange of ideas concerning effective methods of civic service.

At the recent meeting of the American Political Science Association in Buffalo the evening session of Thursday, December 28, was devoted to a discussion of "The County Problem in Municipal Government." Papers were presented on "City and County in New England" by Prof. O. C. Hormell of Bowdoin College, "The City-County Problem in New York City" by Mr. A. C. Ludington of New York, "Chicago and Cook County" by Mr. F. D. Bramhall of the University of Chicago and "City and County of San Francisco" by Mr. Percy Long of San Francisco. The general impression left upon the audience by these papers was that problems of county government have had far too little public attention in this country. It was shown, for example, that in some states where civil service regulations had been applied to city officers none of the posts in county government had as yet felt the influence of this reform. Likewise it was pointed out that restrictive legislation in the way of limits upon annual tax rates, upon borrowing and upon its expenditures such as have been applied to cities and towns in various states have not commonly been made applicable to counties at all. The county in fact seems to be the one area of local government in the United States which has not yet felt the pressure of reforming influences. This cannot long remain the case, however, for the relation between city and county is in many cases so intimate that improvements in the administration of the one are certain ultimately to react upon the other.

A tentative agreement has been reached between the city authorities of Detroit and the officers of the Detroit United Railways whereby it is expected the long-standing friction between these two will be brought to an end. By the terms of this agreement the city offers the Detroit United Railways certain franchise extensions until 1924, at which date the company will relinquish all its franchise rights. In return for these extensions the railway company agrees that the city may purchase the street railways at any time upon six months' notice; likewise that reductions in fares will be made at once (eight tickets for a quarter, with universal transfers on all lines from 5 a. m. until 8 p. m., and six tickets for a quarter during other hours); and, finally, that the company will build at least ten miles of new railway each year. These arrangements are the outcome of seven months of constant negotiation during which about sixty conferences were held between the contracting parties. The agreement is tentative only, since it must be accepted both by the stockholders of the Detroit



United Railways and by the voters of the city before it can go regularly into effect. In the case of the voters a three-fifths majority will be required. But it is anticipated that this can be secured. It is believed that the agreement marks a decisive step in the direction of ultimate municipal ownership.

The movement for wider use of school buildings outside of school hours has begun to show tangible results. By a recent vote of the Cleveland School Board any public school building in the city, not in use for evening classes, may be thrown open for public meetings upon the petition of any fifteen taxpayers. It is stipulated, however, that no sectarian or political meetings which are of a partisan nature shall be held in the school buildings, and that all meetings must be concluded by ten o'clock. The School Committee of Boston has proceeded a step further by throwing open the school building under its control to the political meetings of both parties in the recent state election. It is furthermore proposed in this latter city to obtain from the legislature authority to raise each year in the annual tax levy a special sum of money to be used in making the school buildings of the city more useful along lines which are not strictly educational. In this connection it may be mentioned that a volume dealing with the general subject of wider use of school buildings outside of school hours will shortly appear in the National Municipal League's series published by Messrs. D. Appleton & Co.

Beginning with the January number, the monthly Bulletin of the New York Public Library will contain a list of municipal documents received at that institution. The list will appear in that section of the Bulletin which is devoted to recent accessions. For some time past the New York Public Library has made a special effort to obtain complete files of all regularly-printed municipal documents, as well as periodical publications issued by organizations interested in municipal government. Its monthly list should give to students of municipal affairs bibliographical information similar to that afforded, in the field of state government, by the monthly list of state publications issued under the auspices of the Library of Congress. The authorities of the New York Public Library have also under advisement the preparation of a complete list of all municipal data now on their shelves. This project, if carried through, would furnish a useful addition to the



somewhat meager bibliographical equipment which is at present available to students of municipal government.

The *Kansas City Star*, which journalists concede to be one of the best and fairest newspapers in the United States, has given an emphatic editorial endorsement of the merit system of appointments which has now been applied to the city for somewhat more than a year. The *Star's* verdict is that "the records of every department under the merit system show an increase in efficiency and economy of administration." This statement is accompanied by concrete examples of results obtained. For instance, the license inspectors' office, which collected only \$178,379 during the interval between May 1, 1909, to August 1, 1910, was able, under civil service rules, with exactly the same number of officials, to collect \$239,627 during the period from May 1, 1910, to August 1, 1911. This, it is believed, proves that the license inspectors, when, placed on a permanent footing beyond the reach of political influence, will readily fulfil their duties to the letter. Similar results have been achieved in the auditor's office, where the office expenses were reduced to half what they were before the inauguration of the merit system. In the engineering department, the cost of inspection was reduced from 5.11 per cent to 3.5 per cent of construction outlay. It is not often that we have been able to obtain more exact or more convincing testimony concerning the immediate benefits of civil service provisions applied to city departments.

The Asquith government has under consideration, it is understood, a comprehensive project for a reorganization of London government. The new scheme is said to include the following provisions: 1. The enlargement of the boundaries of the county of London to include "Greater London." 2. The control by an enlarged London County Council of all public services such as are at present under its jurisdiction for the County of London. 3. Local jurisdiction in essentially local matters, with delegated powers such as are now exercised by the Metropolitan Borough Councils, by local authorities, the smaller bodies, if necessary, to be amalgamated. 4. A further application of the principle of equalization of rates to be made throughout the whole of the new area. 5. Uniformity in and centralization of valuation and assessment. 6. Control of poor law institutions and expenditure to be vested in a central poor law board with a unified poor rate, local administration to be left either to committees of local

authorities for general purposes or *ad hoc* committees on the lines of existing boards of guardians. 7. The complete revision of the relations between local taxation and the Imperial Exchequer, the removal of the special grievances under which London at present suffers with regard to the incidence of grants-in-aid, and the simplification of the existing complex system.

"Greater London," according to the recent census, has a population of 7,252,963. It is coterminous with the Metropolitan Police District, contains an area of 693 square miles, and, in addition to the County of London, includes the whole of the County of Middlesex and parts of the Counties of Herts, Kent, Essex and Surrey. It also comprises, apart from the existing London authorities, two county boroughs (Croyden and West Ham), seven municipal boroughs, fifty-nine entire and parts of two other urban districts, six entire and parts of eight other rural districts, twenty-seven elementary education authorities, apart from the County Councils, and ten entire and parts of nine other Boards of Guardians. If the scheme matures London will have an addition to its population of two and three-quarters million persons and an increased area of nearly six hundred acres. The county boundaries will extend from Epsom on the south to Hatfield on the north, and from Erith on the east to Uxbridge on the west. It is obvious that so vast a change in local government cannot be brought about without the settlement of a very great number of difficult questions and the adjustment of a multitude of intricate problems. The framing of appropriate legislation will therefore form a task which will engage the attention of the government for a year or two at least.

Three important public documents relating to English municipal affairs and covering the year 1910-11 have been issued from the press of Messrs. P. S. King & Son, London. These are the *Fortieth Annual Report of the Local Government Board*, which deals with several new administrative experiments including the Unemployed Workmen Act and the Old Age Pension Act; the *Report of the Metropolitan Police Commissioner of London*, which gives special attention this year to the Department of Criminal Investigation, and to such topics as the regulation of public carriages and the maintenance of the health of the police officers; and Volume XXI of *London Statistics* which gives figures for the year 1910-11 on the undermentioned topics: machinery of public administration in London, census statistics, vital statistics, meteorological records, labor, pauperism, lack of employment, public health,

hospitals, housing, public baths, parks, lunacy, theatres, police, fires, education, highways, tramways, port of London, water supply, gas, electricity, rates, debt, valuation, and old age pensions.

Important publications relating to city planning in the United States are the following: *A City Plan for Rochester*. The report prepared for the Rochester Civic Improvement Committee, by Arnold W. Brunner, Frederick Law Olmsted, and Bion J. Arnold (Rochester, New York, 1911, 41 pages). This report relates particularly to the central part of the city, contains many suggestions for the utilization of land for parks and playgrounds, and is well illustrated with maps and plans. *A Plan of Seattle*. Report of the Municipal Plans Commission, submitting the report of Virgil G. Bogue, Engineer (Seattle, Washington: 1911, 235 pages). A general summary is given of civic progress in other cities, and is followed by a report on the following subjects with reference to Seattle: arterial highways, civic center, parks, boulevards, playgrounds, municipal improvements, harbor improvements, the ten sections of the port, the central waterfront, and transportation. The report contains 81 maps and illustrations both of Seattle and of other cities in this country and abroad. *Madison; A Model City*. By John Nolen (Boston, 1911, 168 pages). A report to the Directors of the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association and the Citizens' Committee, taking up Madison as a capital city, as an educational center, as a place of residence, and as to its future development. There are many illustrations, maps, and plans relating to Madison. *A Preliminary Report for a City Plan for Grand Rapids*. By A. W. Brunner and J. M. Carrere (Grand Rapids: Dickinson Bros., 1909. pp. 47). This report was submitted to the City Plan Commission of Grand Rapids and contains illustrations and plans. *The Width and Arrangement of Streets; A Study in Town Planning*. By C. M. Robinson. (New York: The Engineering News Publishing Co., 1911. pp. x, 199). *Pittsburgh. Main Thoroughfares and the Down-Town District. Improvements Necessary to Meet the City's Present and Future Needs*. A report by Frederick Law Olmsted (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Civic Commission, 1911. pp. 169).

Some recent American publications in the general field of municipal government and administration are as follows: C. L. King, *The History of the Government of Denver, with special reference to its Relations with Public Service Corporations* (Denver: Fisher Book Company,

1911. pp. xvi, 322); Eugene McQuillin, *A Treatise on the Law of Municipal Corporations* (2 vols. Chicago: Callaghan & Co., 1911); J. W. Hobbs, *Police Examinations and General Information; A Key and Guide to Department Promotions and State Police Appointments* (Boston: Puritan Press, 1911. pp. 172); John Goodell, *Water Works for Small Cities and Towns* (New York: 1911. pp. 281); B. C. Marsh, *Taxation of Land Values in American Cities* (New York: 1911. pp. 112); John W. Bookwalter, *Rural versus Urban; their Conflict and its causes* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1910. pp. 292); E. E. Pratt, *Industrial Causes of Congestion of Population in New York City* (New York: Columbia University, 1911. pp. 259); and Charles A. Nichols, *Municipal Manual of the City of Detroit* (Detroit: 1911).

The H. W. Wilson Company of Minneapolis, which has already printed in its Debaters' Handbook Series small volumes containing selected readings on *Commission Government* and the *Initiative and Referendum*, has issued a book of *Selected Articles on Municipal Ownership*, compiled by J. E. Morgan and E. D. Bullock (Minneapolis: 1911. pp. xxiv, 219). The selections are accompanied by a full bibliography.

Mr. Maurice B. Dean of the New York Bar, who is well known to lawyers as the author of Dean's Digest of Corporation Cases, has recently published a useful small volume entitled *Municipal Bonds Held Void* (New York: 1911. pp. 122). The book contains a summary of every decision (over five hundred of them) in which American courts have held municipal bonds to be void or have enjoined their issue or denied their certification. The cases are arranged alphabetically by states and give not only the amount of bond issue concerned, but a statement of the principle which underlies the decision and an accurate citation of the case. Much of this information has never before been brought together, and the book will undoubtedly prove of much value to persons interested in municipal finance, as well as to investors in municipal securities. The volume includes three elaborate tables illustrating by states the chief results of the author's study.

It may be interesting to mention that the states in which municipal bonds have never been held void are Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Massachusetts, Maine, Montana, New Hampshire, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, Wyoming. In

the other states and territories bonds to the extent of slightly more than two millions of dollars have been held absolutely void after issuance and delivery. The issue of securities, after proposals for their purchase had been accepted, was enjoined in the case of bond issues amounting to over one hundred and seventy millions.

The November issue of the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* is devoted to a symposium upon the subject of commission government in American cities. There are thirty articles contributed by different writers and covering all phases of the subject. The first part of the symposium deals with the general subject of *Underlying Principles and Typical Plans of Commission Government*, with discussions by Dr. Ernest S. Bradford, Prof. Benjamin F. Shambaugh, Dr. Ford H. MacGregor, Prof. John A. Fairlie and others. The second part is devoted to the *Problems of Commission Government* and contains articles by Dr. Delos F. Wilcox, Dr. Elliot H. Goodwin, Mr. R. S. Childs and others. The third section of the publication discusses the various *Objections, Limitations and Modifications of the Commission Plan*; while Part IV takes up the *Results of Commission Government in Typical Cities of the West and South*.

Messrs. D. Appleton & Co. announce the issue, about March 1, of a volume on *The Initiative, Referendum and Recall*. This book is the second in the series of volumes issued under the auspices of the National Municipal League. It will include selected articles illustrating different points of view upon the subject by Col. Theodore Roosevelt, Gov. Woodrow Wilson, Hon. Robert Treat Paine of Boston, Pres. A. Lawrence Lowell and Prof. L. J. Johnson of Harvard University, Congressman S. W. McCall, Prof. G. H. Haynes of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Mr. J. N. Teal and Mr. F. V. Holman of Portland, Ore., Mr. Meyer Lissner of Los Angeles, Mr. F. W. Catlett of Seattle, and Mr. H. S. Swan of Columbia University. The volume includes a general introduction by the editor and contains a selected bibliography of works bearing on the subject.

Mr. Harvey S. Chase of Boston, a member of President Taft's Commission on Economy and Efficiency, has printed a useful pamphlet entitled "Business Management of Municipalities" (Boston: 1911, pp. 21). The pamphlet contains a statement of practical results

obtained from the establishment of modern accounting systems in Massachusetts cities and is one of a series of lectures given by the writer at the Alexander Hamilton Institute, New York.

The Milwaukee Bureau of Economy and Efficiency has issued, since its establishment, ten reports. The first dealt with the *Plan and Methods of the Bureau's Work*; the second with *Alarm Telegraph Systems*; the third and fourth with various wage questions; the fifth with *The Refuse Incinerator*; the sixth with the *Citizen's Free Employment Bureau*; the seventh with *Free Legal Aid*; the eighth with *The Newsboys of Milwaukee*; the ninth contains a *Review of the Bureau's Work*; and the tenth deals with *Plumbing and House Drain Inspection*. Data is being gathered for reports on various other branches of municipal administration, such as the organization of the public works department, water rates, street construction and cleaning, the management of public structures, the collection of ashes and garbage, the methods of purchasing municipal supplies, licenses and permits, the construction and operation of sewers, infant mortality, and several other interesting topics. These publications, when taken together, will represent the results of what is virtually an administrative survey of Milwaukee.

Some interesting facts are discussed in the Bulletin on the Citizens' Free Employment Bureau of Milwaukee to which reference is made in the foregoing item. This Bureau was established in the latter part of March, 1911. During the first three months of its existence 3850 individuals made application for employment. For about 1100 of these employment was obtained by the Bureau, for the most part in unskilled or partly skilled employments. The expense of maintaining the Bureau during the three months was \$340 or about thirty-one cents for each person who obtained employment. This expense was borne entirely by the Merchant's and Manufacturers' Association of the city. The conclusions of its officers as set forth in the report are that although popular notions concerning the extent of unemployment in American cities are much exaggerated, there is still a large quest for employment by men honestly desiring work and unable to find it. Various recommendations regarding the policy and methods of a free employment bureau are also made in the report.

Another institution of the same type which has issued since its establishment seven reports on various matters is the Chicago Bureau

of Public Efficiency. The purposes of this Bureau, as stated in its plan of organization, are: (1) to scrutinize the systems of accounting maintained by the eight local governments of Chicago; (2) to examine the methods of purchasing materials and supplies and to investigate the letting and execution of contracts for municipal construction; (3) to scan the payrolls of all local governing bodies with a view to detecting overpayment or waste; (4) to make constructive suggestions for improvements in administration and to coöperate with the city officials in the installation of these improved methods; and (5) to furnish the citizens with accurate information concerning public revenues and expenditures, thereby encouraging an interest in efficiency and economy.

The seven reports thus far issued by the Chicago Bureau of Public Efficiency deal with the method of preparing and administering the budget of Cook County (January, 1911); the proposed purchase of voting machines by the Chicago Election Commissioners (May, 1911); street pavements laid in the city of Chicago: an inquiry into paving materials, methods and results (June, 1911); the electrolysis of water pipes in the city of Chicago (July, 1911); the administration of the office of recorder of Cook County, Ill. (September, 1911); a plea for publicity in the office of county treasurer (October, 1911); repairing asphalt pavements (November, 1911).

A municipal reference branch has been established by the Public Library of St. Louis with Mr. Jesse Cunningham, recently of the State Library at Albany, in charge. The reference bureau has been installed in the City Hall and will be maintained for the purpose of supplying municipal information and data to the city assembly and the various administrative departments. The Civic League of St. Louis, which had brought together a large collection of material for its own use, has now turned this over to the Municipal Reference Branch.

During the last few months proposals to adopt commission government charters have been defeated in Pittsfield and Cambridge, Mass., and in Vancouver and Olympia, Wash. Commission government has been adopted by popular vote in Oshkosh, Wis., Sacramento, Cal., Lexington, Ky., Lowell and Lawrence, Mass., Manhattan and Chanute, Kan., Ridgewood, N. J., and Fremont, Mich. Pueblo, Colo., has adopted a commission charter which includes the Grand Junction plan of preferential voting. Bristol, Conn., has adopted a



new charter which contains some features usually found in the commission plan. The elective officers consist of a mayor, six councilmen, city treasurer, three assessors, two auditors, and a board of relief made up of three members. The idea of the city is to combine the commission method placing the supervision of administration in the hands of a few men with the entrusting of certain technical branches of the service of officials who are directly elected and not subordinate to the commission.

Under the provisions of the New Jersey law permitting the establishment of commission governments in municipalities of that state, nineteen cities have placed the question before their voters. Of these seven have declared for the plan and twelve against it.

The total number of cities having commission government now stands at 163 scattered through 33 different states. In addition active agitations for the adoption of the plan are now being carried on in Omaha, Neb., Portland, Ore., Baltimore, Md., Denver, Col., Superior, Wis., and Salem, Mass.

From the United States the commission government propaganda has worked over into Canada and proposals for adopting this scheme of administration will shortly go before the voters of two Canadian cities. One of these is St. John, N. B., which some months ago voted to permit the preparation of a commission charter and the presentation of this to the voters at a later date for decision. The other is Ottawa, Ont., the Dominion capital, where the question will be presented to the voters at the coming annual election. The proposed St. John charter contains provision for the initiative, referendum and recall.

Of the large number of cities which have had experience with the commission form of government during the last few years, only one as yet has voted to re-establish the system of government by a mayor, and aldermen. This is the city of Chelsea, Mass., which, since the fire of four years ago, has been ruled by a commission of five members who were originally appointed by the Governor. At the November elections the voters were called upon to decide whether they wished to continue this commission with the elective membership or to re-establish the system of government by a mayor and a single-chambered council. The latter alternative was adopted by a small majority.

The outcome of the municipal election in Cincinnati on November 8 was a notable victory for the cause of good city government in the

Middle West. Cincinnati has long been at the mercy of a reckless political machine which has never hesitated to use the city patronage for its own partisan purposes. Mr. Henry Hunt, who has just been elected mayor of the city, was a candidate on the Democratic ticket, but he drew the support of a large number of Republicans. His candidacy was backed by various civic and reform organizations.

The short ballot committee of the Municipal Association of Cleveland has printed a careful report upon the need of a short ballot in Ohio. The report discusses the advisability of reducing the number of state, county, and municipal elective officers from about seventy-five (the present total in Cleveland) to less than twenty-five.

At the election of November 8 the voters of Cleveland, by the necessary two-thirds majority, approved a bond issue amounting to two millions of dollars, the proceeds of which are to be expended for the erection of a municipal electric lighting plant which will provide not only for the illumination of the public streets and buildings, but will supply light and power for private use.

Mayor Carter Harrison of Chicago has approved the plan for the establishment of a Housing Bureau in the city's Health Department, this bureau to have the services of sixty additional inspectors who will make a careful examination of tenement house conditions throughout the city. This action was urged upon the mayor by a number of civic organizations.

In accordance with the suggestion by Mayor Gaynor, the New York Board of Aldermen reduced by over eight millions of dollars the expenditure budget submitted by the Board of Estimate and Apportionment. Among the chief departments to which this retrenchment was applied is the Department of Education, in which the estimates were heavily cut at several points. Hitherto the Board of Aldermen has been more prone to raise than to lower figures submitted to it. In the present instance, the action is presumed to show the existence of an understanding between Mayor Gaynor and the Board in a joint effort to out-general the Board of Estimate and Apportionment which alone of the three is not under Tammany influence.

The Department of Health of New York City has been encouraged during the last few months in the task of investigating and overhauling the conditions under which a large part of the baking is done in the more crowded sections of the city. Over two thousand bakeries have been inspected by officials of the department, the inspection covering such things as the quality of the materials used and the con-

ditions under which the making of bread is carried on. The inspectors found the situation in many cases to be intolerable from a sanitary point of view and used their plenary powers to close up about a score of the most unsanitary establishments. Most of the others were required to make important changes in their methods or appliances.

The Third Annual Convention of the Commission Government Association of New York State was held at New York on October 13. The president of the Association, Professor H. S. Fairchild of the University of Rochester, gave his annual address on "Causes of Bad Government in America," attributing municipal shortcomings chiefly to the spoils system and lack of publicity. An address by Hon. George L. Record of Jersey City on "The Primary and Election Law Reform" was one of the features of the convention.

In San Francisco the new Rolph administration, which assumed its duties on January 8, has pledged itself to bring about certain changes in the existing system of city government which will mark a radical departure from the actual methods hitherto practised in the city, although it will not appreciably change the general framework of government. Under the new proposals the chief governing organ of San Francisco will continue to be the Board of Supervisors, composed of eighteen elective members. Each supervisor, however, will be placed in charge of some department of city and county affairs and in the management of this department will have the assistance of a committee. It will be noticed that this change would bring the administration of San Francisco a long way in the direction of full similarity to existing machinery and methods of administration in German cities.

The electors of Los Angeles, Cal., voted at their recent election, upon a proposal to establish a municipal newspaper. The proposal was placed upon the ballot by means of an initiative petition. The suggestion was for the appointment of a committee of three members to undertake the publication, which would be financed by city funds. The paper would appear weekly, would be sent free of cost to every voter and would be non-partisan in attitude.

A movement has been set afoot for the consolidation of Los Angeles and Pasadena. Both cities have difficult water-supply problems confronting them and it is felt in some quarters that united action in the solution of these ought to be secured.

There have been consolidated into one large commercial organiza-

tion, called the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, what were formerly the Chamber of Commerce, the Merchants' Association, and the Downtown Association. Before this consolidation the commercial interests of San Francisco were not able to exert an influence in keeping with their numbers and importance, and it is proposed to secure this through a merger of organizations similar to that which was effected in Boston a few years ago.

San Diego, Cal., has taken up scientific forestry as a municipal enterprise. The city owns approximately seven thousand acres of land suited for forestry development and it has made a beginning in this direction by setting out during the past year forty thousand seedlings.

Everett, Wash., voted on November 7 to establish the single tax system as one of its normal methods of raising municipal revenue, and in Seattle an initiative petition has been circulated asking for a vote upon the same question. In Vancouver, B. C., the system has been in operation for some two or three years.

The League of California Municipalities has strongly endorsed the policy of local option in matters of municipal taxation. At its last meeting a committee of three members was appointed to draft a constitutional amendment which, if adopted, would give each California city a right to determine the scope and incidence of its own local taxation.

By the action of the voters in November the constitution of Massachusetts was amended to provide that hereafter cities might be given statutory authority to take larger areas of private property than that actually required for the widening of public thoroughfares. This amendment is intended to facilitate various street reconstruction projects which are shortly to be undertaken by the city of Boston. A proposed constitutional amendment of somewhat similar import was rejected by the voters of New York.

The annual report of the Boston City Club for 1911 shows the Club membership to be 3117. In every way the Club has been a very striking success. Although it has been lavish in its provision of entertainment for its members, a surplus of \$18,500 is reported for the year. Plans for a new and greatly enlarged club house are now under consideration.

In February, 1910, the Baltimore, Md., Charter Revision Commission, appointed by Ex-Mayor Mahool, submitted its report with a draft of a proposed charter to the legislature, where it failed of

enactment. The charter provides for a single-branch council to take the place of the bicameral council now existing. It also provides for the merit system. A committee of fifty, appointed by a mass meeting of the business men to consider the question, through a subcommittee, reported an amended draft of the charter in which provision is made for non-partisan nominations and elections and the recall, and also that four members of the Board of Estimates and Awards be elected, the other member being appointed by the mayor.

The City Wide Congress, a body composed of delegates from about sixty-five civic, business, and improvement associations of the city has urged the insertion of the initiative and referendum in the proposed charter. The result is that the charter will be introduced into the legislature as agreed upon by the council of fifty and the initiative and referendum will be submitted as a separate proposition. It is generally understood that the city administration is opposed to the proposed charter, and its adoption, whether submitted to the vote of the people or not, is uncertain.

By a very decisive majority the voters of Ottawa, Canada, expressed on January 1 their approval of the formation of a federal district made up of the Dominion capital and the municipalities immediately adjoining it. The movement for a federal district, somewhat on the Washington plan, was inaugurated early in 1911 by the Ottawa Board of Trade and had its immediate origin in a conviction that the Canadian capital ought to have a sufficiently large area to enable the city to be planned, developed and beautified to the best advantage. The proposal upon which the voters have passed affirmatively is that the new federal district should be governed by a paid commission, partly nominated by the Canadian government and partly elected by the voters of Ottawa, the elective members to be in the majority. Provision is made that the Canadian government shall contribute a fair proportion of the revenue necessary for the federal district and that the district shall continue to be represented in the House of Commons.

Now that the plan has been approved by the voters of the city, provincial and federal legislation both will still be necessary to make it effective, but as yet no assurance has been received from either the Canadian or Ontario government that these authorities will take kindly to the scheme. The reason for the departure from the Washington plan is that Ottawa, besides being the capital of the Dominion,

is rapidly becoming an important industrial center. The voters of the city are accordingly not ready to hand over to any government commission the exclusive charge of the city's industrial and commercial prospects.

Governor Foss of Massachusetts has appointed, after long delay, the new Directors of the Port of Boston. The chairman of the Directors, who is appointed for five years at a salary of \$15,000 a year, is Major General Hugh Bancroft. The board will have the spending of about nine millions of dollars in the development of Boston's harbor facilities and in the encouragement of the city's maritime commerce. Its jurisdiction extends over the entire harbor front of the old Boston metropolitan district.

The Water Department of St. Louis has decided to apply the meter system of charges throughout the whole city. St. Louis has had in operation the flat-rate system of charges and the waste of water has been very great. In making the present change the water commissioner has had the backing of the Board of Public Improvements, but has also had vigorous opposition from all quarters of the city.

Final census returns of urban population and growth in the United States show that there are now fifty American cities with populations exceeding a hundred thousand. Three states have five or more cities in this class, namely, New York, Massachusetts and Ohio. The city showing the greatest percentage of growth is Birmingham, Ala., where the increase has been 245 per cent; next come Los Angeles with 212 per cent, Seattle with 194 per cent, and Spokane with 183 per cent.

A special bulletin on the foreign-born white population of large cities shows that this element increased in New York during the decade 1900-1910 by 665,982, or 52.7 per cent. Persons born in Germany and in Ireland decreased in numbers, the former by 18.9 per cent and the latter by 8.2 per cent. Marked increases took place in the number of persons born in Italy, Russia and Finland, and Austro-Hungary.

Census reports on typhoid death rate in American cities show the lowest rate (8.8 per hundred thousand population) in Cincinnati and the highest rate (45.7) in Milwaukee. The rate in other important cities is New York 11.6, Cleveland 13.7, Philadelphia 17.5, Buffalo 20.4, Detroit 23, and Baltimore 42.

The First Congress of the Canadian Public Health Association was held in McGill University, Montreal, during the second week of December. Delegates were present from all the important Canadian

cities, and discussions were devoted to water supply, municipal sanitation and housing. The Association will endeavor to follow the lines already marked out by the Royal Sanitary Institute of Great Britain and the American Public Health Association.

The University of Toronto, Canada, has arranged to inaugurate a course of lectures on civic art and town planning as part of the regular instruction in that institution. The course will be given by Thomas H. Mawson, recently of the University of Liverpool.

The city of Juarez in Mexico has undertaken the unique experiment of placing full control of all the city parks and recreation grounds in charge of a board of eight women.

The American Association for Highway Improvements held its first annual congress in Richmond during the third week of November. The programme included papers on various matters relating to municipal construction and contracts.

(For various items in the foregoing pages I am indebted to Prof. W. F. Dodd of the University of Illinois, and to Mr. F. W. Dickey of Western Reserve University.—W. B. M.)